

# INTEGRITY

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*Growing Old Gracefully*

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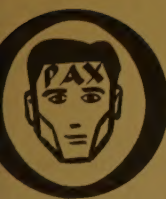
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## EDITORIAL



OLD age "is a depressing subject." At least, that is what we were told almost every time we mentioned to anyone that we were planning an issue on the subject. Why old age is a depressing subject *in our day* (no one has proved to our satisfaction that it is depressing *in itself*) is amply expounded in this issue. There is no need for us to make further mention of it here, save to say that we wish contemporary conditions did not make it so necessary for us to discuss problems that we cannot give much space to discussing the joys of old age.

For joys there must be. Old age, like every period in life, has its joys, on the natural as well as the supernatural level. And the joys are intimately tied up with the old person's place in society, both human society and the society of the Church. In this sense joy and performing a social function go together. Of course, in our times the idea of "social usefulness" has become so narrowed that the only socially useful old people appear to be Churchill the eminent English Prime Minister and Nobel prize winner, Grandma Moses who started a career of painting in her eighties, and Sophie Tucker who is still going strong after fifty years in show business. The same narrow concept of social usefulness is generally behind the well-intentioned plans to re-employ old people on assembly lines.

But there are many other "socially useful" old. Old people who can be seen tucked away in some corner of almost every Catholic Church spending hours praying, who need no justification in the eyes of God even though their priceless contribution in keeping our society together goes oftentimes unnoticed in the eyes of men. Those of us who were blessed with wonderful grandparents, grandmothers noted for their great charity, sympathy and the good humor with which they looked on life, grandfathers who somehow communicated to us their awareness of God and their sometimes awesome sense of responsibility to their fellow men, don't need to be told that old people can make a contribution to society. We are living off their contribution right now.

Old age should have a two-fold joy: the joy of reaping the fruits of a life well-lived, and the joy of anticipation. For the old person is called upon to become as a little child and await the wonder of the kingdom of heaven.

THE EDITOR





"Ring out the old"

# A Requiem for Ayesha

by Alan Keenan, O.F.M.

**T**HE increasing number of old people poses a problem. Father Keenan, an English Franciscan, gives us a general survey of the situation both in England and America.

Chinese honor their ancestors and Catholics pray to the saints because of a deep-seated belief in immortality. The modern man has no framework of religion, on the whole, in which this belief can be enshrined. He does not lose the belief. He finds another framework. Probably he could not be articulate about his belief, and probably he could not defend it. But the hope of survival still demands an outlet and so the outlet becomes strange and abnormal. The outlet is in looking younger and in living longer—so Mr. Hauser would put it. As Canute fought with the waves, people fight with the creeping tide of mortality. For if you do not believe in heaven you will do the best that you can on earth. Your new definition of immortality is *the postponement of mortality*. And there are two sides to the medal. If you live longer you have to look younger.

## Young for centuries"

This creed is writ large in the advertisement section of one last February's *New Yorkers*. Among the cartoons of Kraus and Mr. Arno one reads: "Just as science has discovered new wonders to lengthen our life span, so X has developed a new wonder cosmetic to help your complexion stay younger-looking than you ever dreamed." This is straight Rider Haggard. Ayesha is the lady who stays young for centuries because she drinks regularly from the elixir of life. For \$1.50 you can share her secret.

Such aids are for the spirit as well as for the body. The next advertisement promises not only "a face lift for beauty" but "an uplift for your spirit. You have an uplift for your spirit because you look younger, more beautiful."

The last advertisement gives a picture of a lady who might satisfy Rider Haggard himself. She assures the reading public: "I never dreamed I'd look this young at my age."

The rewards of American culture are reserved for the young not-so-old. As Margaret Mead assures us there are no prizes for the aged. We would do well to examine the extra years that science has gained for us.

In the first instance death is a certainty. For the materialist the desire for immortality can only express itself in a prolongation of mortal life. And no matter how hard one tries, or how much science may dream, there appears to be a concrete boundary for the life of any given individual. The upper boundary of longevity appears to be between the ages of 115 and 120 years. This limit for the individual is explained by biologists in terms of genetic constitution. Such a concept pre-supposes that the environmental causes of death have been removed. In the internal environment of the individual the element of disease has been eradicated and in the external environment the occurrence of accident is prevented. Given such freedom the individual would still die within the second decade of his second century. The cause would be ascribed to old age. This phrase explains nothing but it is the phrase we would have to use. It would summarize the intrinsic mortality that characterizes the living organism which declines into death even in the absence of disease.

### **we're living longer**

In fact only an infinitesimal fraction of the world population reaches such advanced years. No certain prophecies can be made at the birth of any individual as to how long he or she will survive. All that can be done is to marshal the probabilities of survival for a given population. It is a simple matter to take a population of known numbers from a past generation and express the average age at which the people in that population died.

If such surveys are done comparatively over half a century, some indication can be gained of the average life span of that population at different times. In 1900 an individual in the United States might hopefully expect to share in an average life expectation of 48 years. In 1950 the average life expectation had risen to 69 years or more. (These figures are taken from "The Probability of Death" by E. S. Deerey, *Scientific American*, April 1950.)

In medieval Europe most men were lucky to reach the age of 50. Now they are unlucky if they do not reach 70. In Rome in the time of Christ the average life expectation was 32 years of age. In classical Greece it was 35.

You will notice that there was not much difference in the life expectations of Americans in 1900 from those of Britons in 1300. What are the factors which have raised the life of the average man in Massachusetts from 38 years in 1850 to 63 in 1940? And notice what a startling and new problem it is. The average man has not been living so long since the creation of men.



To understand the solution to the problem it is necessary firstly to state that if one plots a curve of human survival it is found that the greatest mortality occurs in the earliest ages of individuals. After about 4 years of age the individual has increasing probability of survival to adult life. These first few years are the most critical ones.

Now at this end of the scale great strides in science have reduced the number of infant deaths. In Britain about twenty-nine children die out of every thousand born. (In the United States the figure is slightly lower.) Ten years ago the mortality rate was fifty per thousand born. One hundred years ago the deaths among infant children alone were 134.7 per thousand. The science of obstetrics has greatly improved of recent years. And so have standards of public health. Some social historians ascribe the great growth in populations in the West to the beginnings of standards of public hygiene at the start of the last century, to the discovery of antiseptics by Lister, to the discovery of anaesthetics and to the methods of germ sterilization begun by Pasteur.

Once upon a time pernicious anaemia was fatal, but not now with B<sup>12</sup> and Folic Acid. Antibiotics reduce the mortality rates of perperal septicaemia and pneumonia, and these were, at one time, lethal diseases. A century ago appendicitis was a fatal disease. As we ascend the survival curve we climb on steps carved out by the tremendous advances of preventive and curative medicine.

In brief, those who are born survive and those who are old die slowly. But only relatively few children are born in Western populations, less actually than would keep the population stable, neither increasing nor decreasing. And this creates a problem which is of the greatest magnitude and one which we probably will not be able to bear.

### **Who will support the old?**

For the United States' population to remain stable it is necessary that every two families on average should produce a minimum of five children. On present average two families produce four children. The problem is at first glance then an *economic* one. Decreasing numbers of the younger working generation are being called on to support increasing numbers of old people who can no longer work to support themselves.

In the United States and in Britain just now four men out of hundred, in round figures, are over 65; and nine women out of hundred are over 60. By 1977 seven men out of every hundred will be over 65 and twelve women out of every hundred will be

over 60. This will inevitably mean that the proportion of consumers in the population is larger than the proportion of producers. It means that women will increasingly be wanted in industry and a further stress will be thrown on the family which is already showing signs of disintegration for quite other reasons.

The matter, still in economic terms, goes further than that. The number of dependents will increase and will have to be supported by the government. This means a heavy increase in indirect taxation and consequently a lowering in the standard of living. Now numerous social surveys all agree that in our contraceptive times people when in financial stress economize on children. One can expect a further fall in an already dangerously low birth rate. The vicious circle would then be complete. As the standard of living falls, less children are born; as the increase in old people continues, taxation becomes higher. The only way in which the problem could be solved would be by an increase in the number of children per family. Only this could restore the natural balance of population; but then the nation would have to pass through considerable reductions in its standard of living. Yet when this danger appears people reduce their family size. So the problem as long as one looks at it on the material plane, remains insoluble since its solution depends on the taking of measures which are critical of the adoption of wide-spread contraception.

### **money or morality**

That is the problem in terms of economics, but in terms of *human relations* the problem is worse. And there is a close connection between them. What we call "the standard of living" is a psychological index as well. The importance of money is in inverse proportion to the decline in spiritual and cultural values. When Marx attacked the Christian belief that the rewards of heaven are immensely more important than riches on earth he said that religion was the opium of the people. It made them content with poverty and sent them to sleep. His metaphysic was "Be a communist and have your heaven on earth." Lots of people do not want communism but they do want their heaven on earth and in accordance with this belief the money which will buy them luxuries and raise their standard of life becomes of great importance. The shift from desiring immortality to working for the postponing of mortality kills the spirit of self-sacrifice and deadens charity. In other words, there is more than a possibility that the young will rebel against supporting the old for the simple reason that it costs money.



Last May the House of Lords in London debated a motion on the well-being of the family. Lord Saltoun declared that the old, i.e. persons over 65, numbered about twelve per cent of the population. He pointed out that the care and maintenance of an old person would depend upon the taxation levied on four people engaged in active employment. The noble Lord declared then he had been told by men "of undoubtedly high moral standards that they do not consider children have any duty to maintain old people, and that they themselves do not consider that they have any duty to maintain their parents." He then pointed out the senselessness of that attitude. "We no longer feel ourselves charged with the support of our own parents and for that very reason we are charged with the support of the parents of our neighbors." This is robbing Peter to pay Paul with a vengeance. The wholesale rejection of the precept of the Fourth Commandment compels the state to absolve children from supporting their own parents while giving them as a penance indirect taxation to make them support the parents of others.

A further step in the deterioration of human relations is still possible. In Britain there are state-sponsored institutions for the insane. "When people get old sometimes they get senile," continued Lord Saltoun in the debate, "but they are not mad and they should not be put into mental institutions. Yet with this breakdown in family feeling, one hears of relatives who are only too anxious to have old people certified if, by so doing, they can get them put into a mental institution and so relieve themselves of the burden."

Let that sink into your consciousness and into your imagination. In the old days the Romans threw the Christians into the lion pit. After two thousand years of Christianity there are some Christians who would throw their aging relatives into the Snake Pit. Give me the Romans every time. At least death was quicker in the arena.

### **Old people in institutions**

This writer has spent some time interviewing old people in private nursing homes. These were not government institutions. The patients or their relatives paid. For the payment they received good material service. In some cases the staff were quite wonderful. But in nearly every case the aged patient had relatives—who were busy living their own lives however. The old people had food, warmth and some comfort. But they had no sense of *belonging* and they all felt, to varying degrees, bewildered. There were apple-cheeked grannies who fifty years ago would never have been

segregated from a family like that. In the family circle their little eccentricities would have been fun for the children, but there they were only a nuisance. They had to conform to a pattern and that was fatal. You cannot change a lifetime of habits without bewilderment; and the human heart never stops wanting to love and be loved. Only in the family circle could these old people have meant much to anybody. They were too old to mean much to each other. God loved them but many of them did not know it.

The root cause seemed to be the absence of stability in the family. Its roots binding one member to another did not seem to be able to balance out care for the aged in face of self-sacrifice and lowered standards of living. Is charity beginning to disappear from modern marriages? Faith certainly seems to be diminishing. Margaret Mead (*Male and Female*) thinks that in the United States the end of marriage as a contract for life is in sight, except for those couples who belong to a particular religious faith.

So grandparents and maiden aunts have gone out of fashion. Numerous households of three or four have replaced the larger ones when grandparents and aunts were in the house or near enough to share in the work. Instead we have the home help and the baby sitter, who cost money but who are not old.

Could it be that the old remind us of our mortality?

There are not many gains apparently in being old. The price in loneliness and bewilderment is too heavy. The state institution or the mental home is not attractive. Euthanasia perhaps is just round the corner. And the only people who really seem to gain from the cult of Ayesha are the insurance companies.



**Don't treat your grandma with respect**

**If you would aim to please her.**

**You'll just remind her of her age**

**And might bring on a seizure!**

PS

# Our Attitude toward the Old

*It is doubtful that we shall be able to make necessary changes in social institutions affecting the old unless we change our attitude toward them. Caryll Houselander, the English writer whose *Comforting of Christ*, *Reed of God* and other works have made her well-loved, gives a way to seeing the aged with the eyes of faith.*

**Caryll Houselander:** It is one of the saddest as well as most significant signs of the times that the words "the *problem* of old age" are so often on our lips. Sadder still that old age has indeed become for many people an emotional as well as a material problem, a problem for the old people themselves and for the younger ones who are finally responsible to care for them.

The "problem" is not really that of old age, or old people, but of the whole family, and the inter-relationship of all the members of the family from the great-grandparents to the newest infant, and it is the family itself and even the very idea of a family, which is threatened by our so called civilization. Threatened with extinction and with countless individual tragedies on the way to extinction.

## family problem

Few of us need to look beyond our own street, or perhaps our own front door, to realize what are the commonest outward circumstances that make family life, and the survival of the idea of the family, almost unbearably difficult to many millions of people.

There is, perhaps first of all, on the material side the housing situation—the terrible shortage of homes and space—crowding families together, compelling young married people to start their own family life in the parents' home, in a situation which is as trying to them as it is to the young ones. With the coming of the grandchildren there are three generations living together, the already crowded home becomes overcrowded, and the already strained nerves become exasperated.

This overcrowding and lack of their own home is one of many reasons leading young men and women to dread the arrival of children. It is one of the reasons why countless children grow



up knowing instinctively that they are just as unwanted as the most tragic of all tragic old people—those who have become a burden to their sons and daughters.

It need hardly be said that the divorce court, with thousands of broken homes where children's faith has been shattered, is adding day after day to the destruction of the idea of family, and to the difficulties of those who have grown old in disunited families.

Children who have grown up estranged and often separated from one of their parents by the other, are unlikely to give them the love and care that the parents want when they become old and helpless.

### **mercy killing**

The Commandment to "Honor your father and your mother" is not by any means always an easy one for children brought up with no real knowledge of Christ, brought up in freedom to break all the other Commandments. First, to think themselves wiser than God, wiser and more merciful, entitled therefore to kill, to frustrate the purpose of natural love, to use both birth control, and as logically follows this attitude, death control; to deny their own potential children life, if by giving them life they involve themselves in self-denial on the material plane, or curtail some of their own pleasures, or (as they would probably protest) if the children themselves would grow up in poverty.

Monsignor Ronald Knox has said that there are many people today who think it better not to be born, than to be born and not to go to Eton!

At the root of this attitude is selfishness—each member of the family knows himself only as an individual, here on earth to get all the personal gratification he can, and to avoid as far as possibly can all personal suffering. See how inevitably such an attitude, when the emotions are deeply involved in it, can and will lead to the idea of "mercy killing," especially in the case of those who are old and incurably ill or infirm. Man dares to think himself more merciful than God, to decide that it is for him, not for God, to say "Enough" and to end the life of the old person who is so tragically indeed at *his* "mercy"! Little does he know what abundant mercy God may be pouring out on the soon-to-be-reborn soul of the dying person through the very suffering he proposes to cut short. Selfish man prefers to kill than to go on keeping the vigil (so painful to *himself*) by the bedside, or expending the care (so costly to himself) on the old person who trusts him.

## complex situation

However, the problem of old age goes very far beyond that of old people who have children, or families at all; there are old unmarried people, those who have perhaps been lonely all their lives, and now when they are most lonely of all have no one of their own" to turn to, and of course no home of their own. Again, and this is the most pitiful, there are old people who are thrown upon the charity of the state, who have become destitute and who are put into institutions. Those rare old husbands and wives who have stayed together and grown old together, and who are now often torn apart and put into separate institutions. Those poor old spinsters who have clung to the last to one little room of their own, and perhaps a beloved old cat, who are taken away to the chill atmosphere of the Workhouse, with its bare wooden tables, bleak dormitories and total lack of privacy.

I have said enough, though not by any means all that could be said, to suggest that the problem of old age is a complex one, one which includes the yet more complex one of the family. To solve all these complexities is not any easy task. It does not mean only economic reform; it does not mean only more houses, it does not mean only, though this would help, a more realistic education of our Christian lines. No, the solution demands something that goes much deeper than any of those things; it needs an understanding of what the family is, an understanding true enough to inspire every individual with *love* strong enough to overcome the many formidable enemies that threaten it.

## the family of God

Now I am not speaking only of the natural family, for in that case I would be excluding countless old people from the effects that such love should inspire; I am speaking now of the super-relationship of the whole human race as the family of God.

The natural family is an image of that, as such we can dwell a little on what the family really is in God's decree.

It is not as so many think of it today a collection of individuals brought together, sometimes forced upon one another by circumstances. No, it is a real unity, a *oneness*, it is a group of people who are one because not only do they have the same flesh and blood, but they have the same *life*; they live by the same life and for them all. Moreover the purpose of that life is to give more life, to increase the life that belongs to them, because God has given it to them. A young father who well understood this, showing me to his first child said, "Look, he is looking at you with his mother's

eyes from my face, and his heart is beating with the life of both of our hearts."

The inter-relationship of the family of the whole human race is even closer than this natural relationship, it is the inseparableness of Christ in His "Body on earth." Indwelt as we are by Christ, we are in a true if mysterious sense "one Christ." Because this is so, it is not only *my* old mother or *my* old father who has a right to my love and my care, it is *every* old person.

If I deny *any* old person the love I owe him I deny it to Christ. If I refuse to accept the vicarious suffering of seeing him suffer and comforting him to the end, if that comes to me to do, I am dragging Christ down from His Cross, His redeeming Cross. If I turn from him because the sadness, perhaps the ugliness of old age repels me, I am turning away from Christ on His way to Calvary and on the eve—the advent if you will—of His glorious resurrection.

### **imagination and faith**

In order to make this a reality to us, and to increase our love, we need to broaden and deepen our conception of the indwelling of Christ in man, and we need to ground it more and more in *faith* rather than in imagination.

When the wonder of this mystery of God's love is first revealed to us we are *helped* by imagination. As we become more and more engrossed in it we must draw more and more upon *faith*.

Let me explain. It is easier to believe in the indwelling presence of Christ in one who shares some circumstance of Christ's historical life on earth. We can readily believe in the presence of the child Christ in a lovable and beautiful child. We can "see" Christ the teacher in our own preachers, we can see Him, the young man sacrificed, in our young men who sacrifice their lives in war.

But it is far less easy for us, influenced as we always are by imagination, to realize that He indwells those who are old. For the historical Christ never was old. We almost imagine that the failing of the aged is something outside of the suffering of Christ—that He was dependent as a little child, but never dependent as someone becoming like a little child again in old age.

It is at this point that we turn to Our Lady for a deeper and more supernatural understanding of the mystery. To Our Lady and the young man whom Christ trusted to care for His mother in her old age.

Usually I think we only picture these two, Our Lady and St. John as young. Our Lady as the girl of fifteen who bore Christ.



in her immaculate body, St. John as the boy whom Christ most loved among His apostles. But Christ allowed both of these to grow old, John very old indeed, outliving all the other apostles, who were martyred, and Our Lady growing old in his care.

### another advent

I want to go back for a moment to the first advent. It was characteristic of Christ to choose a winter birth. Characteristic of Him to hide the seed of Everlasting Spring, of the "newness of heaven and earth" in His mother's womb, at the time when the seed that would make the earth green with life was hidden under fields of iron, when the winter greyness and cold was upon the world, the dancing waters frozen and still, the days short, the darkness early and long, the trees bare, and the skies leaden. A time indeed when no one would dream that in that tiny seed buried in darkness was germinating the life and flowering of the whole world.

Now to every one of us there are seasons of advent in the soul, times when it is hard indeed to believe that in our numbed spirits love is germinating. If this is so in the case of young people, how much more so in the old? How difficult for them to realize themselves that this time, old age, which seems like the end, is the last advent in which Christ is being formed in them for His birth into glory! It is difficult for them to realize and difficult for us too, excepting by sheer faith.

The old seem, like the barren earth before Christmas, to be stripped of beauty. The bleakness is upon their thoughts, the hard frost on their feelings. It is no longer easy to mumble a prayer with the lips, no longer does lyrical prayer rise spontaneously from the heart. The hands, like the roots of an old tree, are folded and stiff; the days are growing shorter and the darkness very long. Yes, but this is advent, this is the time when finally and for ever life and newness and spring—the everlasting youngness and beauty of Christ—is being formed and moving secretly toward His birth.

So it was that Our Lady went through the advent of old age. What could be more significant than Christ's choice of John to be her son and to give her his home to grow old and die in, John who more than anyone else who had known Christ on earth penetrated the mystery of Christ living on for all time in the souls who love Him.

It is for John's faith that we must pray; for he, perhaps the greatest poet and the greatest mystic who has ever lived, must have

contemplated Christ—now that he no longer saw Him in the body—in the soul of His mother, growing old in his care.

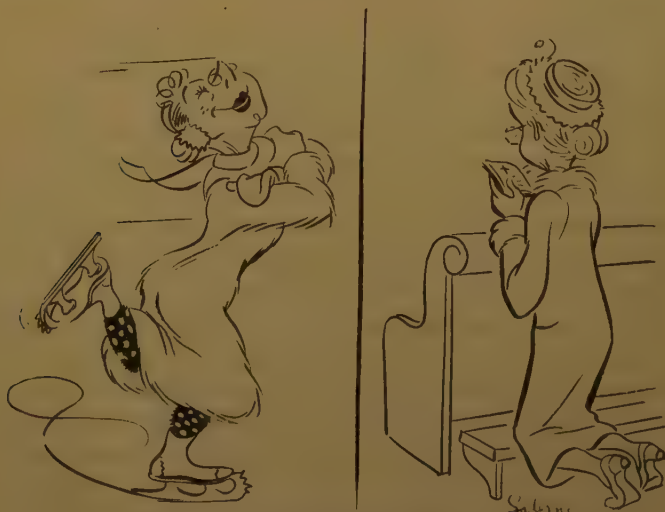
Faith in this great truth can transform our own insight. We shall no longer see old age as something ugly, or incomplete, or even to be feared. Neither shall we want to alter its pace; we shall see in it the *hidden* beauty of Christ being formed, and recognize the rhythms of His own timing for His secret growth.

It is this faith in the presence of Christ in the souls of old people, of Christ being formed in them, growing toward His newness, His eternal beauty in them. and only this faith which can solve the "problem of old age."

For those who are already old it can so sweeten the time that is left to them, the advent that seems to pass so slowly but is in fact moving so swiftly to their new birth into Christ's eternal life, that His own beauty will begin to radiate from their souls even in this life, endearing them to those who might otherwise have cared for them only as a hard duty, but now do so joyfully.

For those not yet old it explains and transforms everything that previously seemed baffling and difficult to accept in old age. It inspires them with that deep love which makes it both their privilege and their delight to overcome all the complex difficulties of "the problem" until it is no longer a problem at all. Those who know by faith what it is to be *one* in Christ echo His words "Blessed are they who have not seen, but have believed."

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**Growing Old Gracefully**

## *To Saint Therese*

Dear saint, the dull slow burden of my state  
Deadens to pain you only can console  
When this my life seems stranger to the great  
Heroic ways that call my better soul.

Had you not been, I scarce could bear to be—  
A petty pilgrim on unscouted ways  
Searching the dreams long lost to God and me  
In vain among my bric-a-brac of days.

But then a Lady lifts me up to you.  
The devil's moment dies as your sweet voice  
Whispers the secret Little Way to do  
Great deeds in humble acts. And I rejoice  
That I can touch on heaven, conquer hell,  
And bring the world to God within my cell.

J. G. Shaw



# Psychiatric and Social Work With Old People

“**G**ERIATRICS” by now is a familiar word in our language, for the ills—physical and emotional—of the old have been receiving much attention. Dr. Karl Stern, whose autobiography *The Pillar of Fire* was justly popular, is chief of the psychiatric division of Ottawa General Hospital.

**Karl Stern, M.D.:** Since 1945 I have been doing some work with old people, in association with the social agencies in Montreal. The following few remarks are based on observations which were then gathered.

Psychiatry of old age is not only a question of senility. The organic impairment of the brain which comes in some people with old age is only a small part of the problem. The situation is quite similar to the situation in the development of child psychiatry. All we knew about child psychiatry until about forty years ago was the psychiatry of idiocy, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy and so on—in other words the psychiatry of those children who needed institutional care or special schooling. Since then the problems of emotional suffering of all those children who are intellectually normal, and the impairment of intellectual grasp in children whose life situation is difficult, have come more and more to our attention. Today the child guidance clinics deal more with emotional difficulties than with organically retarded children. In the psychiatry of old age the situation is quite similar. The ordinary textbook of psychiatry gives under the heading of “Psychiatry of Old Age” only descriptions of organic illnesses of the brain which, in most cases, make custodial care necessary. The difficulties of mentally normal oldsters living in the community have only recently received enough attention. I am unable to give a systematic survey. I should like to choose only a few points which may be of interest to your readers.

## **technocratic civilization**

Many of the difficulties which beset our old people are due to the fact that we live in a technocratic civilization. It seems that in rural cultures old people are better integrated. In China, in biblical Israel, in rural areas of pre-revolutionary Russia, old peo-

ple seem to have played a more creative role. They were consulted as the counsellors. They were regarded as people of wisdom. In a technocratic type of civilization in which the assembly line counts, in which the individual is specialized in his activity, and in which the efficiency is very often just a matter of speed, it happens easily that old age has only a negative aspect. The old person is thrown onto the rubbish heap, so to speak. With this goes the fact that our civilization brings about small apartments, shortage of space so that it rarely happens that three generations can live together. In a rural setting it is quite frequent that grandparents, parents and children are more or less under one roof. The grandparents have still somehow an integrated function within the entire family. Thus, a lot of the problems of old age reflect the problems of our present society.

### **"genteel poverty"?**

This brings me to another point which is loosely connected with the things I have just mentioned. When I began my work at the social agencies I frequently encountered people who received old age support, either an old age pension or so-called "charity" or both, and lived in the rooming areas of downtown Montreal. Needless to say that these people lived in great poverty. Nevertheless some of them appeared, dressed in a peculiar shabby sort of elegance, as if right out of an Edwardian stage play. The ladies would have a faint lavender scent, and the men would at times carry a pince-nez on a black string. They would speak in a rather well chosen somewhat stilted English, with an Oxonian accent. In the beginning I thought that this was what one commonly calls "genteel poverty." In other words, these people emphasized an air of pseudo-elegance because they were embarrassed about the fact that they received financial support during old age. However, when I got to know them more closely it became obvious that the relation of cause and effect was the other way around. They had been all their lives quite unrealistic, and this was the reason for their receiving support in old age. They had, for reasons which would be difficult to explain in an article such as this, early in life identified themselves with a *social role* at a time when the child should identify himself in a natural way with the parent as a human being.

### **Time of bereavement**

One of the most frequent situations in which we were called on were reactions of grief. Old age is the time of bereavement. Men lose their wives; women lose their husbands; aged parents lose children; or old people lose their last surviving friends. There

were several remarkable features about those grief reactions in oldsters. Firstly, there is a strong tendency to have little overt feelings of depression; the depression is replaced, as it were, by a physical illness. A man of 65 who had lost his only son in a traffic accident immediately following a serious quarrel between father and son (there was no doubt that the son in his fury had "run into" the accident) had no overt feelings of grief or guilt. But he suffered, immediately after the son's death, from a severe, excruciating and seemingly untractable attack of sciatica. We treated his sciatica as a "depressive equivalent," that is to say from a psychiatric point of view. A man of 69, after his wife's death, developed severe bronchial disease. An old widow, after her husband's death, suffered three accidents (bone fractures) within two years. One of these occurred on Christmas Eve, while she was in domestic employment and helping to prepare the family's Christmas.

In cases like this the mechanism is quite complex. There are strong unconscious death wishes, with an identification with the deceased; the unconscious self-destructiveness is at the same time due to guilt feelings. In every case of death we have guilt feelings toward those for whom we mourn. The point is that in old people all this is apt to remain on a deeply unconscious level and to be "lived," as it were, on the somatic level. From a psychoanalytical point of view this displacement is probably a defence mechanism; to "act" one's grief "out," with the accompanying feelings of guilt, would endanger the personality too much.

Two other features which we observed in the grief reactions of old people can probably be explained on the same basis. Whenever we lose a person who has been close to us we are apt to embellish his personality in our phantasy. We do not like to talk about his faults. *De mortuis nil nisi bene*. In old people this assumes at times a bizarre degree. One of our clients who had often come running for help when her husband was in a state of drunken violence, not only developed a blind spot for all this after his death but spoke of him as one speaks of saints. These same mourners often show suddenly an irrational hostility against a living person in their immediate surrounding. We explain this as a displacement of the hostility they once harbored against the deceased person. This, too, is a defence against the threat of ambivalence (contradictory nature of emotions) which the aged mourning person is unable to tolerate. His feelings which have always been divided become now divided in the most literal sense of the word: all the hostility which was at one time directed



against the person now dead is beamed toward an innocent survivor, and all the love is, in an undiluted form, lavished on the deceased.

I could speak of many more observations but even these few examples demonstrate that the emotional upsets of old age show certain characteristic features, and that psychiatric and social work with old people requires much understanding and patience.

### **transference**

This brings me to the last point. One of the most remarkable discoveries of Freud was that of the mechanisms of transference and counter-transference. By that one means the following. A patient is, during psychotherapy, not neutral and indifferent toward his physician. He goes through puzzling and seemingly irrational phases of love or hostility. These phases are due to the fact that the patient experiences, unconsciously, in the physician a figure from childhood, such as a parental or brother or sister image which was heavily charged with emotions. He *transfers* ("carries over") feelings which are actually part of another setting. Counter-transference is the opposite. Doctors, nurses and social workers are often anything but neutral in their attitude toward patients with psychological difficulties. They, unconsciously, see in the patient a figure from their own history who had a dramatic emotional significance. As far as transference is concerned we usually found that the old client, although he could chronologically be the father of the physician or the social worker, nevertheless established a child-parent relationship with him.

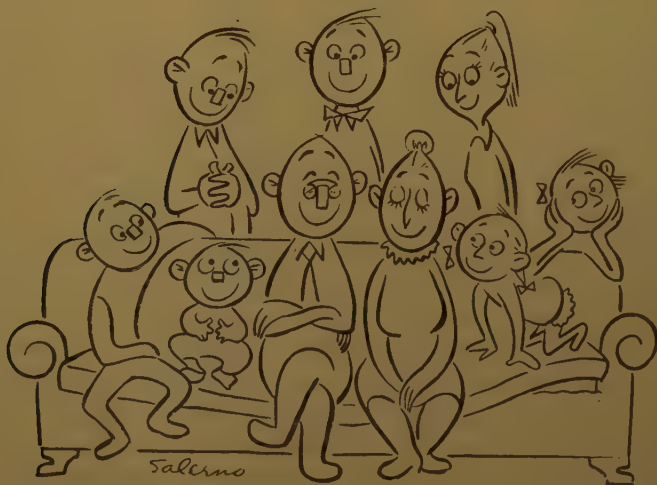
Even more important were the mechanisms of counter-transference. We saw frequently that social workers and young physicians became quite anxious and disturbed when working exclusively with oldsters. The following are the three most important unconscious mechanisms behind this. Firstly, the social worker or physician identified himself with the client, i.e. he saw himself unconsciously as an old person, indigent and dependent on support. His insecurity was mobilized during work with these people. Secondly, the professional person had some unresolved difficulty with a parental figure in his own life, and therefore the intimate contact with dependent old people evoked unconscious feelings of hostility and guilt. Thirdly, we all depend, much more than we admit, on the gratification brought by success. It is wonderful to treat a child with pneumonia or an eighteen-year-old with difficulties of adjustment. There is often the gratification of having "gotten somewhere." In the case of psychiatric work with oldsters the best one can often hope for is relief of symptoms. In

many cases there is no outward, visible sign of success at all. One of my teachers in Internal Medicine used to say that the value of a physician does not show up in the treatment of scarlet fever but in the treatment of chronic infirmities.

Thus we see that in work with old people, particularly poor old people, our spiritual resources are tested more than in other kinds of work. It is a challenge, and we must be prepared for it, on the natural as well as on the supernatural level.

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**Their Social Security**

# Behind the Patchwork Curtain

OUR attitude toward the aged is conditioned by the society in which we live. The "problem of the aged" cannot be solved simply by the individual or by the family alone. To solve it we must recognize the multitudinous social problems of which it is a part. Elaine Malley, whose last previous article in *INTEGRITY* was in our Woman issue, discusses this fact.

**Elaine Malley:** One of the signs that our times are out of joint is the tendency to make problems out of circumstances that in a well-integrated society are perfectly simple. We have ordered our course, we have streamlined our vehicles, and everything that impedes our swift and urgent progress is shunted aside. When it insists upon asserting itself because it is part of the natural plan, it becomes an obstruction, a problem, and we deal with it accordingly.

Within the past half-century the problem of old age has been given a number of summary treatments. Old people form the bulk of our unemployed and unemployables. Although, as a nation, we reject their intervention in the central scheme of our lives, we have tried to make up for this rejection by doing innumerable things to make their last years on earth rosy and pleasant for them. They have annuities, pensions, old age insurance; there are homes for the aged, hospitals provided to cope with the special readjustments of old age, guidance and recreation centers, golden age clubs, and employment agencies which offer them tasks at which they can feel useful and which tend to take up the slack of certain jobs no one else will fill.

Why, then, does our social conscience continue to prick us, why is old age still a problem, why does euthanasia loom menacingly on our horizon? Because we have adopted every measure against euthanasia to put our aged beyond the orbit of our activities, we have failed to take them into account in the solicitude and intimacy of our everyday lives. They live behind a patchwork curtain which we have to keep patching lest through the threadbare places we see their eyes upon us, still empty and disconsolate. We are like the Pharisees to whom Our Lord said: "Why do you so transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said: *Honor thy father and thy mother*. . . . But you say:



Whosoever shall say to father or mother, The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me, shall profit thee."

We give our gift, and not too willingly, in taxes to our government and in donations to charitable institutions, to take the old people off our hands. And they are doing a fine job, within the scope of their limitations.

### **solution of the past**

It was once the task of charitable organizations to take care of those old people who had no living relatives left to care for them, the exception to the rule. People took care of their own, there was room for them in the home, there was a place for them in the pattern of living.

I remember an old rambling house in Maracaibo, whose mosaic patio, set with niches enshrining ancient virgins and saints, was filled with the fragrance of lime trees, oleander and jasmine, and the flicker of little green lizards. I remember the leisurely order that prevailed over a menage whose hospitality extended to innumerable children, in-laws, transient guests who came for a day and remained for months, higher servants and lower servants, and old servants, spoiled darlings who had outlived their years of service and went padding about under the vine-covered arches and through the cool, dark rooms, mumbling their toothless gums, fingering their rosaries, and muttering audibly about the slovenliness and carelessness of the active servants. Doddering old trouble-makers they were, to be sure, but they never made any trouble, for there was room in everyone's heart for them, there was time to listen to them, there was a place for them in the order of things. If their estate was respected, what can be said for that of the old people in the family, the grandparents, the great-uncles and great-aunts, whose opinions were consulted on every major family issue, whose loving old fingers were on the warm pulse of life and fecundity that vibrated throughout the household, before whom babies, visitors, novelties of every kind were paraded with joy and pride? Certainly there were secrets and tensions and loud, excited controversies in which everyone took part, human nature being what it is. But the moral vitality of the home in which *no* controversies take place is suspect.

### **present conditions**

True, it can be maintained that the house I mention is a relic of the feudal age. We live in different times. Most of us do not have the big houses, the means, the servants, the leisure, to live in such grand manner. Much that was bad as well as much that was good has disappeared with the passing of that way of life:

the tyrannous hold of the old on the lives of their children, an arbitrary caste system, in many instances cast-iron family traditions that were more pressing in their injunctions than justice itself.

We are in a state of upheaval, an age of transition, we are groping our way to a new order. No one can predict with any degree of certainty what form it will take, exactly what new patterns of human relations will emerge when the dust is laid. Prophecy ranges from interplanetary triumphs, through tidy terrestrial utopias, to the grim totalitarianism of "1984," or the total extinction of human life on this earth. All we know is that we are on the way.

Meanwhile we live an uprooted existence, harassed by the complexity of our responsibilities, caught up in the high-voltage pressure of demands made on our time, our resources, our energies. Sensing the instability of the present and future, lacking incentive for building on these shifting sands anything of enduring permanence, we are perforce cramped into temporary living quarters, so unsuited for gracious living that numbers of us exchange them whenever possible for the hotel, the theater, the restaurant, the beach, the mountains, the shop, the office, the school, even the mad escape of warfare. We are encompassed on every side by "problems"—problem husbands, problem wives, problem children, not to mention the undigested and indigestible problems of the world that are thrust upon us daily by newspapers, radios, and other media of mass communication. Under the circumstances, many of us, in providing comparative security for our aged in asylums protected from the feverish congestion of our lives, are doing the best we can.

### **Living with their children**

For the patchwork curtain exists even when old people are given shelter in the homes of their adult children. This, too, is compromise. Their status is frequently ambiguous, ranging from the extreme to another. If they have private means, their status is that of the paying guest, and at times the commercial relationship is shockingly conspicuous. If they are financially dependent, it may be that of the unpaid servant. Either they are heavily imposed upon, bearing the weight of the burdens of the entire household, or they dare not lift a finger for fear of seeming to interfere. They inflict their wills imperiously on their grown-up hosts, or their personal idiosyncracies make them the butt of furtive or overt disparagement. Whatever the circumstances, their position is

equivocal, and it is difficult for them to merge into the organic unit of the "family proper."

Of course, there are homes where such arrangements do work out with every appearance of success. Love has found a way, somehow. These homes are a tribute to the loyalty and forbearance and discretion and generosity that human nature is capable of rising to in response to grace.

In many places, however, inevitable tensions make themselves felt, and at times the emotional stress becomes intolerable. One example is vividly portrayed in a book that came out in 1934: *Years Are So Long*, by Josephine Lawrence. It deals with the pitiful plight of an old couple who have raised a large family and given them all they have. Destitute, they throw themselves on the charity of their grown children, who separate them and take turns parcelling them about among themselves, pushing them from one house to another, everywhere grudgingly tolerated or openly resented. It is inhumanity of this sort that has made institutions for the aged seem the ideal alternative. But the waiting lists of these institutions are long, and many old people fear the regimentation of institutional life. Numbers of them resort to more haphazard methods for living out their days.

### **maintaining independence**

Once the aged gloried in the strength and support and comfort of their young. Today it is their independence in which they take pride—a lonely independence to which they have been goaded by the ingratitude or helplessness of those who owe them their lives.

Rootless, aimless, but, thanks either to economic forethought or social welfare, not helpless, they wander about our cities, the more privileged wintering in Miami, the impecunious holing up in a one-room apartment, with a dog or cat for company, sitting in the sun on warm days, showing to strangers pictures and letters from their children or grandchildren whom they seldom or never see.

This article does not presume to criticize the aged or their families for the expedencies to which they are driven under the present-day set-up. It is not so much that love and good will are wanting, but that in the majority of instances they are frustrated because they lack intelligent direction. This is a symptom of our general malaise, a danger signal of a generation deprived of the sustenance of both earth and spirit.

It is more than ever true that

"The world is too much with us. Late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."



But "*this* is the day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice therein." We may not allow the present to go unfulfilled for the sake of a mist-shrouded tomorrow.

One of the things which makes our age the age of heroism is the necessity for keeping our hold on natural and supernatural values in the midst of our ephemeral but insistent distractions, and of reshaping a world where these values may find expression in action. We are so constituted that once we lose sight of the supernatural order the natural order deteriorates. When we abandon the sacramental view of life that sees and uses all things as instruments for growth in holiness, we develop a contempt for those which inconvenience us. Loss of patience is one of the inevitable corollaries of loss of faith.

### **Honor first**

If we are to give our aged their due, we must begin by honoring them, and this entails imperatively honoring their state in life. We are more or less conscious of the gratitude we owe them for what they have done for us in the *past*. We are less likely to realize the homage we owe them *for what they are at present*. We speak of "marvellous" old people who are able to engage in outstanding activities. Our pragmatic eyes are apt to be blind to the wonder that attends those whom God, in His love, is stripping of their dearest faculties in the holy progression of His designs for them.

We may be able to dissipate the patchwork curtain that divides our old people from us, but there is a veil impossible for us to penetrate—the mystery of the years that lie between us. We cannot sense the climate of their state in life through personal experience. (It has been likened to childhood, but it is different from childhood. Sometimes a person with a severe illness presents



As you grow so old and weak,  
And your bones begin to creak,  
You'll not find it quite so odd  
To spend your time on thoughts of God.

a resemblance. But the resemblance is deceptive, for old age is not a sickness. It may require the assistance of a physician to assuage its physical manifestations, but it is an intrinsic part of a normal life.)

The physical and psychological sciences can give us some idea of the bodily and mental condition of the aged. But only by analogy can we get a clue to the hidden spiritual fermentation at work in the depths of their being. And only here can we find the key to a true appreciation of their actual dignity and their fundamental needs.

### **change and continuity**

Every stage in life is governed by two principles: that of continuity and that of change. From the ecstatic moment of conception, when the dream of God, present from all eternity, is summoned to militant mortal life, to the final rapture when mortality and struggle cease and immortality takes over, the indivisible person undergoes a continuous process of unfolding and reaction to inner and outer stimuli, causing radical personality mutations. We recognize these mutations in the transitions from infancy to childhood, from adolescence to adulthood, from maturity to senility. What we frequently fail to recognize is that each period is a stage whereon the forces of good and evil wage their incessant battle for the possession of the soul under new conditions. With each fresh development God reiterates the motif of His original creation, giving it new overtones, new dimensions. And the soul, if it is in the state of grace, responds joyfully with the Psalmist to each dawn of an advanced challenge to its powers: "Now have I begun; this is a change from the Right Hand of the Most High."

It is essential if the individual is to make a successful adjustment to each new phase in his life that the break with the past should not be too sudden. He must be able to feel a recapitulation of what he has thus far learned and accomplished underlying the surface of the unknown terrain which he has now reached. In other words, change is most beneficent where continuity is most coherent.

For example, we are rediscovering through depth psychology (what our less learned progenitors knew instinctively) that the newborn baby should be kept close to its mother, that the period of lactation—a prolongation of the infant's prenatal dependence on its mother's body—is favorable to the child's gradual adjustment to independence.

During the stages of adulthood and maturity the individual is capable of sustaining quite rigorous and radical vicissitudes, be-

cause the personality is more firmly established and the human being is at the height of his powers. It is during the delicate periods of transition, when the whole personality is engaged in inner adaptations and reconciliations, that violent change is dangerous. And it is the requirements of these critical periods which modern society is apt to overlook.

### **the support of the familiar**

This is what is fundamentally responsible for the social tragedy of growing old in our days. At a time when physical stamina and vigor are beginning to ebb and the old person needs the support of all that he is familiar with to help him adapt to strange and frightening new experiences, the ground is suddenly cut off under his feet. A man finds his job gone, and with it the companionship of those with whom he has worked for years. A woman who, through a lifetime of housekeeping, has developed an intimate affinity with the routine of her services and the confines of her habitat, is uprooted (in many cases out of misdirected concern for her comfort) and placed in strange surroundings which destroy the purposive bearing of all her past activities. We all know the example of the old person who is capable of sustained work that challenges the ability of much younger men. The habit of work has become second nature to him. It is less difficult for him to go on performing it than it is to adjust to sudden and unprecedented leisure in an alien environment, even if he is economically prepared to enjoy that leisure. Both the flower left on the tree and the cut flower placed in a vase shrivel and fade. But the flower withering on the tree performs an organic function there for which it was destined.

It is true that as age advances vigorous exertion should be curtailed. But the process of curtailment, the loosening of the reins, should be gradual, progressive. This is facilitated if the aged can feel their burdens being shared and taken over by capable young people, their children, or their personally trained apprentices (sons-in-craft, as it were). The soul is at this time being called upon to relinquish its hold on the preoccupations of this world and turn its attention to matters of eternity. Except in the case of miraculous intervention, this takes time. God, in His patience and wisdom, knows how to temper the wind to His shorn lamb. One by one, old friends die. Little by little, strength fails, hands falter, eyes dim, and the cacaphony of the world thunders in vain upon silent ears. The flesh is being prepared for the release of the spirit, that it may return to the bosom of the earth out of which it sprang, to await there the resurrection of the body; the



soul is being reduced, pared down to the bare essentials required for the imminent adventure of death.

### **generation to generation**

It is an accepted maxim that the growing family unit, consisting of father, mother, and children, should be independent of the authority of those to whom separate members once owed obedience. Generally speaking, the best way to achieve this independence is by the establishment of separate dwelling quarters. But here, again, continuity should not be sacrificed. Historically and culturally, every generation stands upon the shoulders of the preceding one. "I am the Vine, you are the branches" should have geneological as well as spiritual succession, for the Mystical Body is one in flesh as well as in spirit. Our allegiance to our immediate lineage demands expression in active reinforcement of the links that bind us. In villages where new families settle near the ancestral home frequent festive visits keep the ties alive. As distances widen, means of communication multiply. By keeping the ratio constant, the village pattern may be preserved on a larger scale, but if it gets too large it is apt to get out of hand.

The land movement is wholesome because it provides a sound natural basis for continuity. The industrial system is unhealthy (at least in its present aspect) because it does not accept the whole person, it exploits only that part of him, and that period of his life, which it can utilize with profit. The discarded by-products are only valued for their consumptive power.

### **the major tragedy**

For all its deplorable effects, the segregation of our aged from the material affairs of humanity is negligible in comparison with a greater evil that proceeds from our social order—their segregation from God. This, of all things, they are permitted to share with the rest of the world. Few find it strange for an old person to be still stalking mundane pursuits and vanities. Indeed, he is encouraged to do so, as if this world were all there is. The fact is that the patchwork curtain, like all other human barriers, exists because it is one of the numerous progeny of the great wall humanity has built about itself to shut out the relentless searching light of Eternal Truth. Since He is everywhere, one must be forever raising new barricades to screen Him out.

Secularism is pernicious at any age. But in younger people it is shot through with so many illusions its squalor is dissembled. The artificial glitter of man-made lights give them the illusion of daylight. If one fuse burns out there are others flickering on. For the aged, however, secularism is felt in all its naked horror. The

of reality is coming, but they do not know it. They only know that for them the current is being turned off. The past is phantasm, the future blank, the present meaningless.

Under these circumstances, it is almost impossible for them to appreciate the tremendous worth of this precious interval. Death comes like a thief in the night to many people, snatching them up at the very crest of their folly. The old, however, have been spared for this quiet darkness of the senses, where God's love leads them for a space that they may be disenchanted, cleansed of the world, and prepared for the vision of the Spirit. This is the bath time of the seven ages of man, when the soul is invited, after its six ages of labor, to learn to share in His infinite tranquility, His all-pervading repose.

### **help them see their goal**

St. Thomas Aquinas in his later life declared that his *Summa Theologica*, which for centuries has nourished the minds of saints and directed their labors, was nothing but "straw." We can glory in the profound humility of his great soul. We can also rejoice in these obscure old people in the world today who through long practices of prayer and mortification have become detached from the necessity for seeing any importance in the labor to which their lives have been dedicated.

But we are not therefore permitted to expect such heights of veneration from the majority, for whom the pattern of perfection has certainly not been implicit in the general tenor of their environment. We are poor things, and most of us cling desperately to our trappings and encumbrances, not so much out of pride as from the fear of our nakedness and unworthiness in God's sight.

It is our task, in accordance with our gifts, to strive for the regeneration of our society, so that all its members, at all times, may visualize within its ramifications their common goal and individual responsibilities as Christians. We may be called to participate in the land movement, to find roots again in the soil, in our natural mother, and build homesteads with a view to generations of growth and the development of a valid culture. Or we may work toward bringing about within the industrial field an orientation toward making responsible provision for humanity's material and spiritual needs and restoring to work its human content and supernatural significance.

### **best part**

Meanwhile each of us must work out in his own life the best for giving our aged all that their state in life requires of us.

We owe them honor, respect, and support. Above all, we owe to them to work for our own personal holiness. The best return we can make to our aged for all they mean to us is the gift of a living Christ within us. Only in this way can we give them assurance that they are loved and wanted, for only through Him do we know how to love and want.

We need the old as much as they need us. Standing between two worlds, comparatively free from the passions that plague youth, they are capable of an objectivity of vision, of a salutary comparison not unmixed with gentle irony, of increasing detachment and wisdom. All of this is balm to our feverish activity. Their growing physical frailty serves to remind us to "seek first the kingdom of heaven." If our children are deprived of the experience of close and affectionate intercourse with their grandparents, they miss out on an object lesson vital to their grasp of spiritual realities. In their parents they see love in action, concerned with means and effects, busy with many things. In their grandparents they can find love at rest, occupied with nothing but the pleasure of beholding and delighting in the loved one. This, as Our Lord once said, is the best part. Let it not be taken away from them.

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## MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord  
For He hath done great things to me,  
For He doth carve me with the sword  
To form the niche where He shall be.

From bright ciborium He lifts  
The lid revealing rancid shame,  
And empties, purges, fills with gifts  
Beyond the wit of man to name

The whited sepulchre He breaks  
And wakes corruption with a word--  
For all He gives and all He takes  
My soul doth magnify the Lord.

—J. E. P. BUTLER





## “From Here to Eternity”

by Marion Mitchell Stancioff

*UNTIL* Thy faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away, the abode of this earthly sojourn being dissolved an eternal dwelling is prepared for them in Heaven.”

Mrs. Stancioff, who is familiar to our readers, writes about old time of gradual dissolving of our earthly abode.

When thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself and didst walk as thou wouldst but when thou shalt be old . . . another shall lead thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not” (John XXI).

These words of Jesus to Peter strike the aging with a shock. Those who have been busy since earliest infancy building up our material independence cannot but resent any suggestion of its coming to an end. Not only our physical life but our spiritual life itself demands so much strength, decision, initiative and responsibility that these qualities in course of time seem almost an end in themselves. We put so much of our heart and mind into this material character building that we come to think of it as inseparable from our spiritual person. Then, one day, with only the faintest of whispered warnings we find ourselves confronted with a situation in which these qualities, by some hidden chemistry

of the soul, have been transformed into obstacles. We thought we had learned how to handle life and now suddenly we must learn how to let ourselves be handled by it. "Another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not."

Old age is the natural substitute for supernatural detachment. It submits us against our will to that diminishment which we were unwilling to accept. We would not kill our appetite for this world, so we suffer the gradual decay of our appetite for everything. What we would not give up for God's sake He tears away from us for our own.

This process of "stripping" the old happens on all levels. It is a loss of position, a taking away of goods, on the *social, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual* planes. The physical ruin is that which most glaringly strikes the outsider, the not-yet-old. Yet every work of destruction is painful and God does not spare us on any plane. But in our inhuman age man has added unnecessary elements of agony to the *social stripping* of the aging.

### **keepers of the word**

Old people began to lose ground long ago. Their social importance began to slip when writing was invented. In early times the old were the only recorders, the living archives of the families, tribes and nations. Mankind therefore treated them as official memory—holding all that was known, all history and law, all natural laws and human standards—with the profound respect which we reserve for the Library of Congress or the I.B.M. Even though the social function of the old had dwindled the old remained deeply grooved habits of reverence as well as religious injunctions to honor our elders. So for thousands of years after written records began and as long as religion remained firmly rooted, the old continued to be venerable in the eyes of the young. Or they were at least shown the outward tokens of respect. Their appearances of honor survived in the West right into the nineteenth century, and are said to exist as yet in those "backward" countries where religion and the family still play a major part.

It was only natural however when the mechanistic view of life came to prevail in the Western world that the young should cease to respect those rusting machines the old so obviously are, and natural too that the old should cease to respect themselves. Once their physical day is done the aging in our society either become apologetic for their declining existence, or, if they have money, spend it in putting on a show of youthfulness. By aping the antics of the young they entirely abdicate their function and dignity.

## pretending they're young

The elders in emulation of "youngsters" turn into "oldsters." These grey-haired "girls" and "boys" take their opinions from their children for fear of seeming out of date, thus implying that their ideas are permanent. They nervously defer to the judgment of the young who speak with the shrill voice of recent authority. Why should the old endure the fatigue of debate and the bitterness of being worsted when they are themselves unsure of their positions? Why hand on the fruits of experience which are so slowly ripen when taste demands bright new notions freshly milled each day? This state of mind has become so general that few can imagine the old as having any hope of their own, but only pale reflections of youthful hopes.

There was a popular movie two or three years ago which justified this outlook. The star was cast as a kindly humorous character who took upon himself to cheer up the dejected wrecks who fill an old people's home. The film showed this aim achieved in the revival in these old people of some of the desires of their youth. We were treated to a melancholy spectacle, a sort of *danse macabre*, of creaking frames and worn limbs going through the motions of courtship and ambition and playfulness beside the waiting graves. These old people, deprived for years of their proper position in the society of their fellow men, snatched at the shadow-replicas of the past that were offered them. This was the only resurrection they or their benefactor was capable of imagining. Hope, her neck twisted, was forced to face backward and look toward the buried past.

To such palsied clowning the liquidation of the old is the ultimate sequel. When times of economic stress prevent the old being cheered by baubles their elimination becomes both logical and kindly. Such measures have not only been suggested but applied in states less prosperous than our own. Without going to that extreme we daily tend to remove the last vestiges of old people's social dignity and reduce them deliberately to seek refuge in second childhood. Others have dealt in these pages with the remedies for this man-made increase in the miseries of the old. We shall now look at their trials on other levels.

## Physical decline

In addition to this social stripping which is in great part both natural and avoidable, the old endure a *physical stripping* which is natural and inevitable. There are the illnesses and aches and pains, the gradual decay. There is the inability to climb a hill with-

out panting or to swing the axe (or the golf club for that matter) there is the loss of the old sharp accuracy, and to man's ingrained desire for improvement these little things are deep humiliations. There is the necessity to change lifelong tasks and eating habits, deference to hitherto unthought of bodily organs—silent servants suddenly turned tyrant. There are potentialities of pain in a raspberry seed or fragment of nut unsuspected until false teeth are worn. To need rest when others are fresh and alert, or to have to turn down jobs, trips or outings for fear of being a bother to boss, family or friends, is sad enough. It is worse in a mirror to catch a glimpse of something misshapen and to know it is oneself, and to know the distaste it causes must be greater yet to others. Sight is not the only sense which the old sometimes offend in; they usually know it. They hear a quavering voice replace their familiar tones, they know that both their touch and smell make the squeamish shrink. It sometimes seems to them as if a magician's wand had enclosed them in a strange and vile box. A suffocatingly horrible nightmare if one did not know that this was an awakening to come. It is difficult to picture the darkness of those who feel only the foul reality of the transformation without belief in the awakening.

These bodily miseries are thus at the same time *emotional losses*. The flood of animal spirits which lifts the young over many rugged places is, in the old, dried up to the smallest drops. The aging body is less ductile than ever to the intentions of the spirit, and those intentions lose their force like a bowstring stretched too long. Weakness arrests the most generous gesture, interrupts the most selfless work. Worst of all, there is a semi-weariness of feeling, a semi-retirement of the heart. There is poverty like watching others feel and having somehow lost the key to feeling the same things with any violence. This remoteness of feeling builds a transparent wall around the old. There they sit alone in a world from which the faces they knew in their childhood, their youth, their active maturity, have vanished. If some few perhaps survive they are astonishingly changed from what they were. For the rest the faces that move in the memory of the old are dust. It takes a great vitality of heart for them to be again and again to love the new faces that appear on the rim of their lonely world.

### **shorn of many things**

While the emotions are dying down into their winter slumber, *the mind is suffering losses* too; and they are bitter in proportion to the part the mind has played thus far. It too is marked by



gishness which drags it back always more often from finest thoughts to the little worn-out world that houses it. As they grow people of learning know that they know more than they ever before, but by a cruel trick of memory the facts do not present themselves together to be assessed and correlated but keep ducking diving and eluding synthesis. This decreasing grip on thought is a cruel distress in age. Another anxiety is the sense of disappearing time. There is regret at so much time lost and so little hope of finishing that it hardly seems worthwhile to try. So much is feared that is impossible to hand on, so much to which no one has the key. The panicky fear that time is drawing in paralyzes the mind with the desperate certainty that it will soon reach the finishing point and that "the night cometh in which no man can work."

So we have seen the old gradually but pitilessly shorn of many things—including many intangible things they least expected to lose. *All do not suffer all these strippings*; all suffer some of them. Loss of social importance and dignity, the comfort of an obedient and dependable body, responsive sensitivity and strength of feeling, a firm clear mind. All these are in greater or lesser degree the lot of man if he lives long enough.

### **faith, hope and love**

It is evident to us that this lot is infinitely more unhappy than ignorance or indifference deprives the old of the one key which can open the cell of their sufferings: faith which explains, hope which turns them toward the joy for which we were created, love which is the only means of reaching joy. These theological virtues alone can change old age *from the waiting room of hell to the stairway of heaven*.

In this light we see that all this sorrowful stripping of the old is not unlike the "night of the senses" St. John of the Cross and other theologians tell of. "No man of himself can succeed in voiding himself of all his desires in order to come to God" (1st *cent* of Mt. Carmel). In both cases the pain and the purgation come from God, but in the "night of sense" the soul has invited them by prayer and willing sacrifice while the old are at first naturally reluctant to receive them. In the first case the soul knows that it is being done and seeks to share the work, while in the second it is purely passive. But this purgation, like the other, clears away the clutter of our addictions and affections and repulsions and sets us for the main task of life.

Even at the eleventh hour it is not too late. But whether we use this hour of freedom for the purposes of love or spend the

eve of our death whimpering for self-ease is our affair. God has done what He can to wean us. If we prefer to starve, He will force the manna down our retching gullets. In the end it is we who must choose.

Those who have loved God long and truly need not wait till old age to show them their own abjection. Being much in God's glorious company they have few illusions left about themselves. This recognition of one's own poverty is called humility and is simply an eminent degree of truthfulness toward oneself. Only the insistent confrontation with our own hollowness and poverty can make us humble. Old age with its multiple abjections and humiliations sometimes effects this. It is God's last tender pressing effort to rid us of our own falsehood and make us ready to enter upon an eternity of truth.

### **God's merciful action**

This however is not quite all. There is a further stripping of one last great penury which sometimes awaits the old who are devout and loving. This is a chill of the spirit which is like the chill of their limbs. Their love of God dries up like the flow of their other emotions. (It is not to be confused with the emotional slackness of which I wrote above, though its source may be the same, for I speak of those souls whose love of God has long been independent of the ebb and flow of emotional tides, a love long founded on the rock of faith.) They seem to have lost with their memory for little things also their memory of divine ones, and with their taste for food is gone also their taste for Paradise.

"No man can void himself of all his desires in order to come to God." So God voids him, even of this love and desire for Himself. At least, so it appears to the impoverished soul who goes through this final emptiness. This is not—to continue our earlier parallel—an exact counterpart of the "dark night of the spirit," the last trial of the soul before union with God, for that night is the fruit of heroic selflessness and love. But this state of which I speak is too very dark and cold and terrible.

And here too although they are no longer felt, the old guides are hope and faith and love. And since they are unrecognizable to the diminished faculties, the only course of action left is to resist sloth, which is the besetting temptation of old age, and to continue meticulously to fulfill the duties of religion in faith and in darkness.

This last dragging wearisome pedestrian fidelity of the soul will assuredly win for it that union which the saints have won through storm.



**"I will go unto the altar of God,  
Unto God Who giveth joy to my YOUTH."**

## Attention: Young Couples

**STRETCHING THE FAMILY INCOME**  
 By Robert and Helen Cissell  
 Wagner, \$3.00

This is a practical, factual, very readable guide to family economics which any couple bent on

pursuing a Christian family life will find exceedingly helpful. It contains a wealth of information on wise buymanship of food, clothing, the home, furniture and various insurance including social security benefits. There are discussions of modern unethical advertising and sales techniques which induce people to buy things so rapidly that they go far into debt and higher human aims are sacrificed to material progress.

The family either tries to get enough money to buy everything for every member—so that the father is tied up in one or two jobs, with his wife bringing up the children alone; or the wife herself takes what in the long run is unprofitable employment outside the home. Or the parents limit the size of the family so that the survivors may have all the luxuries they want. The problem is not "freedom from want" so much as "freedom from wanting everything." The authors quote from Dom Virgil Michel, O.S.B., who has derived a down to earth guide from St. Thomas Aquinas for deciding what is necessary for a Christian standard of living:

- "1) Absolute necessities: basic food, clothing and shelter necessary for life.
- "2) Conditioned necessities: items made necessary by the time and place and one's state in life . . . the family will be able to govern expenses only by considering whether the item in question is needed for a more wholesome family life in its own particular circumstances.
- "3) Luxuries: these are items without which a family can get along very well, particularly when getting them requires time and effort which should go into family living."

To illustrate the proper use of material things, the purchase of a washing or sewing machine will save both money and the time and energy of the mother. The Christian and American standard of living should go together toward conserving time and energy for family activities and development of individual talents.

Many marital problems arise from financial misunderstandings. There must be teamwork among all members of the family, including children when they are old enough, for successful money management. The wife's best interests are not served if she is shielded from money matters. Just in case some are not convinced of the importance of a budget and of knowing where one's money is going, the authors point out that in the moderate income family, between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will be spent in the first 25 years. The chapter on planning the budget offers the most sensible method we've seen in a long time. By subtracting your fixed expenses from your estimated income you know what you can spend for daily living and what can be set aside for savings. Operate on an economical cash system—this is stressed. If expenses are going to be larger than income, go back over the list and see if they can't be reduced in such way as to "cut the food bill with home canning, home maintenance costs by



doing your own repairing and remodeling, cut hair, repair shoes and clothing, rebuild old furniture and toys, have family parties and picnics and in other ways save money through working together." Apropos these suggestions the authors include chapters on Balancing the Kitchen Budget, Stretching the Clothing Dollar, Furnishing the Home, Family Recreation, The Productive Family, the Home Barbershop, Preparing Mr. and Mrs. Tomorrow. Since they are trained teachers and the parents of five children (Mr. Cissell is presently a professor of Family Economics at Xavier U.) they are in a specially well suited position to offer sound advice. The importance of the food budget is emphasized because it forms such a large part of the family expenditures. We are urged not to overlook the pennies—for example, in grocery buying use good quality but not fancy foods. A savings of 5¢ a meal per person adds up to a sizable amount in a year.

It goes without saying that a portion of our income should be set aside regularly so that we may borrow without interest from ourselves when we have an unforeseen expense. Many of us have found it impossible to save and have had to resort to loans and installment buying. The chapters on Modern Credit Agencies and the Boom in Small Loans are eye-openers (paying interest on interest on a loan for \$100, while we have the actual use of only half that amount when spread through the year). In an appendix interest charges are computed showing the great difference in the cost of consumer credit. The chapters on the Co-operative and Achieving the Family Wage are heartening.

With words of warning to fools who rush in, the authors discuss how much house you can buy on the basis of "predictable income, minus house-payments, plus children." Someone suggested to us that in today's market the figures the authors arrive at are over-cautious. On the contrary we feel they are realistic. It seems highly worthwhile to know, for instance, that "for a long-term, high interest loan the interest may almost equal the value of the original mortgage. The family that gets a \$10,000 loan at 6% for 25 years will pay back not only the \$10,000 but also an additional \$9,330 for interest." It's certainly in the family's interest to sacrifice to save up the highest down payment they possibly can and get their loan at the lowest rate they can find.

We heartily concur with the Cissell's suggestion that our schools and colleges include in their curriculum a detailed and specific course in family finance. If the students are to live the good life they learn about, they must learn also to spend wisely their future (probably) limited incomes.

MATILDE J. NOLTE

## Reform From Within

### **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BUSINESS MAN**

**By Howard R. Bowen  
Harper, \$3.50**

Among those who are concerned with the application of Christianity for the reformation of our world, there are two minds. I would call them the *revolutionary* and the *evolutionary*. The Church has a place for both. Its usual progress is evolutionary, since time is on its side and it can afford to wait. Yet from time to time revolutions have been accomplished by the saints, who, you might say, were impatient for heaven.

For ordinary sinners looking at the present world, there seems to be an apocalyptic shadow over our days. It seems like a time to listen to no one save poets and saints; to pay more attention to the apparitions of the Blessed Mother than to the slow reformation of business men. Yet we cannot withdraw into inaction behind clichés of doom. Each one serves by doing his best in his daily routine. The imagined martyrdom may never come. Six-thirty A.M. always does.

This book performs a real service in discussing the application of Christian ethics in business, where so many of us spend our days. It is one of a series of six books on "The Ethics and Economics of Society," which is being published under the auspices of a committee of the Federal Council of Churches.

This study discusses the doctrine of social responsibility, by which it means the voluntary assumption by business men of the social consequences of their economic acts. It is only concerned with big business and the men who direct the major corporations. It lists the economic goals and the evolution of business thinking from *laissez faire* to present-day capitalism. It gives Protestant views of the business man's responsibilities, and quotes business men for their own ideas on the subject. It enquires into the reasons why business men are becoming more concerned with their social obligations. It gives various proposals for changes in business organization to assure more responsible business action. It gives a chapter to our own pet, the Industry Council Plan, also touching on the C.I.O. version. It discusses income distribution and other ethical issues such as working conditions.

A good point, to me, was brought out in the assertion that the standard of living was dual: including goods and services, and the daily working conditions.

The book succeeds very well in its aim. It gives a very comprehensive survey of what I have called the evolutionary progress toward the goal of social justice. It gives the path of reform from within, by business men themselves. This approach will not satisfy many of *Integrity's* readers.

Yet we Catholics are sometimes guilty of writing too much of what should be, rather than attempting the more difficult thing of demonstrating how present things are hiding the bridges to the better future. We cannot leap to the ready-made Utopia. We must follow the Pontiffs, who are bridge-builders.

For example I think there is a wide field in the "inspection and diagnosis" thinking which Marshall McLuhan demonstrated in *The Mechanical Bride*.

We need to answer the charge in the introduction to *Industrialism and the Popes*, which was reviewed in *Integrity* for November, 1953: "Catholics have a most disastrous tendency to cleave to the abstract and the generalized and to fight shy of the concrete and the particular. We are everlastingly developing and repeating 'principles' but can never make up our minds to apply them to reality. . . ."

We can be thankful for this good work of our Protestant compatriots. We still need the radical application of our philosophy and the strong meat of doctrine. We also need the concrete pedestrian application of Christian principles to the "awful dailiness" of economic life.

JOHN C. HICKS

## Recreation Center for the Old

GROUP WORK WITH THE AGED  
by Susan H. Kubie and Gertrude Landau  
International Universities Press, \$3.50

Nine years ago the William Hodson Community Center was set up in New York City as a day center

for old people. This book is the record of those nine years, written by some of the staff workers, and giving their analysis of the social problems of the aged and how they feel they have been solved through this recreation center. Those who started the project "saw one set of problems and one set of older person—those who received public assistance. They saw them in the particular circumstances of a large city where arbitrary retirement from work, crowded living conditions and their longevity made their loneliness a conspicuous condition."

The authors take an optimistic view of the results of their project, setting it in a way to help the old continue their personal growth, to participate in a community life, and to satisfy their social needs. These results are accomplished through group recreation, birthday parties, participation in dramatics, arts, crafts, hobbies, and opportunity for conversation with people their own age. The authors make much of their observation that "old people react on the same principles as all people," and evidently see no particular meaning to old age, no special vocation for the old. One would be rash indeed to gainsay the value of the recreational activities in giving the old the sense of community and contentment which our contemporary society has cheated them, but to the Christian and such a book as this must inevitably fall short, since the old have a more profound, contemplative contribution to make to society than that of the level of mere "busy work."

Recognizing the social ills that have made such centers necessary, the authors make no suggestions for remedying them. For that, of course, one cannot blame them since that was not the purpose of their work. However, it may make the reader note that day centers for the aged are in the same category as day nurseries—good expedients for a bad society. While we wish in no way to belittle the work of those in charge of them, we cannot forget our collective obligation of working to change the social order which makes them a necessity.

Since to the Christian old age is the time of special preparation for death, it might be interesting to note the remarks of the authors on this subject: "In so large a membership deaths occur constantly and at first the staff dreaded their effects on this community. But here too we had something to learn about old people. They were more realistic and less active than we. Death does not come as a shock to them—they have gone through this experience too often in their long lives. Nor do they dwell on its implications for themselves. It is as though they put it aside with a mild satisfaction in their own survival and continued to live in the expectation that there will be tomorrows like today. It was the staff, accustomed to workings with younger clients, who had to adjust to the fact that at this age it is death which most often closes a case."

DOROTHY DOHEN

## "Crime Against the Race"

**TOO LATE THE PHALAROPE**  
By Alan Paton  
Scribner, \$3.50

This is the story of a man and his great tragedy, and the consequent ruination of himself and his family. It deals with the terrible justice

meted out for the crime of interracial adultery in South Africa.

The sin of Pieter van Vlaanderen, well respected Lieutenant of Police in his town, a hero both as warrior and athlete, and son of a patriarchal and awesome Boer father, forms the plot of this excellent novel. It emphasizes his fear of being discovered, his disgrace, and the civil consequences.

The author, Alan Paton, tells the story in the person of a sympathetic aunt who feels she knows that a failure is imminent and why it has brewed through the years of Pieter's life. Paton, who also wrote *Cry, the Beloved Country*, has a thorough knowledge of South Africa, its people, customs, and tensions. His work reads easily and he maintains a high level of suspense. He aids his story by a deep undertone of sorrow befitting the nature of his plot.

EDWARD R. GREGORY

## Moral Values

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS**  
By Dietrich von Hildebrand  
David McKay, \$6.00

The author of this volume expresses his purpose in the introductory chapter: "The task of ethics is to attain to a full philosophical *prise de conscience*."

... moral data . . . and to arrive thereby at a precise notion of their specific nature, of their full significance, and of the presuppositions of man's conduct required for the possession of moral goodness. Ethics is further bound to inquire into the difference between the moral sphere and the other spheres and to discover especially the relations existing between the moral sphere and God, and between the moral goodness and man's destiny. The indispensable prerequisite for this, however, is faithfulness to moral experience, to the moral data which are given to us in our daily life through great literature, in the lives of the saints, in the liturgy of Holy Church, and above all, in the Gospel."

With great skill and abundant learning the author has proceeded to undertake this task. The present volume admittedly does not complete the undertaking, and, it seems to me, the whole volume could well bear the title of the valuable introductory chapter: "Prolegomena." For it is concerned with establishing the data of ethics. The author starts with the notion of "importance" and step by step builds up to a clear-cut notion of moral values.

Although the style of this volume is much clearer and more readable than some of the author's previous works, this is a difficult work to read because of the technical level on which the discussion is carried out. Nevertheless, it is a most valuable contribution to the science of ethics.

J. V. C.



## Important Pamphlet

### ARE WE REALLY TEACHING RELIGION?

by F. J. Sheed

Sheed & Ward, 75¢

ask them on the subject: Are we *Really* Teaching Religion? With that diplomacy and equal firmness, Mr. Sheed answered: No. Of course, he didn't stop there, but went on to indicate what he thought was inadequate in the teaching of religion and how it might be improved. This pamphlet is the result. It contains the original address and an added introduction entitled: "On Teaching the Key Doctrines."

Mr. Sheed has a right to be heard on this question. As he points out, he has had experience in many teaching institutions. However, his answer is based on a more limited experience, but one of great significance. The conclusions drawn here are based on his experience with those Catholics who have been willing to devote themselves to Catholic Evidence Guild work. Mr. Sheed is right in thinking that such Catholics are above average; yet it is among them that he found the evidence he is using here. Even among them "you don't feel the whole Catholic outlook on life profoundly comprehended or really very much adverted to."

This pamphlet will be of inestimable value to all teachers of religion; we should like to recommend it also to Catholic parents, for the kind of teaching suggested here should not have to wait for school years.

J. V. C.

## The Family Will Like This

### WITH THE BIBLE THROUGH THE CHURCH YEAR

by Richard Beron, O.S.B.

Anthemon, \$4.95

son, yet it is so intelligently executed that even more intellectual adults will enjoy and be inspired by it.

Starting with the Old Testament for Autumn reading, the book takes us through the Church year and through the entire Bible. Father Beron tells the Bible stories, omitting extraneous detail, simplifying without destroying essential meanings. Mary Perkins Ryan provides the introductions to the liturgical seasons, and shows how the scriptural passages chosen help us to live according to the mind of the Church. She says: "The Bible is the plot of the great Play of God's love for mankind which is still unfolding in human history. The meaning of this story is Our Lord Himself and His work of our Redemption, and the pattern of the story is to be found in the mysteries of His Incarnation, His Passion and Death and Resurrection, the bringing of mankind to share the fruits of the Redemption in the Church, and the final completion of the Work of Redemption in Our Lord's full triumph at the end of the world."

"The Church has us live through this story every year in her feasts and seasons, so that it will gradually become the inner history, the blueprint, the pattern of our lives."

The illustrations by Benedictine Brothers are especially noteworthy. They are modern, without at the same time being too radical for the average

This is a book that is beautiful in every way. Intended for use by families, it is simply enough written so that it can be understood and appreciated by young children.

age family to take. All in all, I have no hesitation in recommending the volume to any Christian family. Happily it has none of the drawbacks of much of the liturgical material put out for family consumption, which is often so advanced, and in a sense esoteric, that the reader must already have a great deal of knowledge merely to find it understandable. *Walking the Bible through the Church Year* does not call for any academic background—just a willing spirit.

Strong paper and sturdy binding assure that this book will stand well under the stress and strain of family reading, and the large, clear type will please grandmother especially.

DOROTHY DOHEN

## Protestant Thinking on the Social Gospel

**CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SOCIAL ACTION**  
 Edited by John Hutchins  
 Scribner, \$3.50

In 1930, a small group of Protestant leaders headed by Reinhold Niebuhr

came together to "explore and express a form of social Christianity independent of both Marxism, and Pacificism." They called themselves the Fellowship of Socialist Christians. They were the kind of group that is called reactionary, revolutionary or radical according to the onlooker's political label, and they approached modern problems with a happy disregard for the courtesies and conventions of materialist society. They came into conflict with four major streams of thought: the socialism of the Social Gospel, the raised eyebrows of "conventional religion" (under which challenging head the Church of Rome seems to be listed); the sterility of Marxism, and the urbanity of secularism. In 1947 the name was changed to "Frontier Fellowship." "Socialism" was acquiring new and more meanings; and in 1951, the group was incorporated in the wider organization of Christian Action.

Dominating the group then and now was Reinhold Niebuhr, a man whose adherence to that form of Christianity called Protestant and here called is sufficiently great and good to warrant the respect, if not the allegiance of Catholics. If Protestantism was originally a defection from the Church it is men like Niebuhr (and his disciples) whose creatively Christian thinking may one day close the gap. Such men cannot be dismissed with a pious snort.

The massive volume under review is a report by the disciples of Niebuhr on the results of twenty-one years' active probing into the problems of Christianity and today's world. It is the kind of book which frightens this reviewer, firstly because being a stranger to the American scene, the book has to be taken at its face value alone, and secondly because its face value is extremely good. It would be quite easy to find many contentious points in it, and quite easy to adopt the lofty tone of "we-were-there-first" Catholicism. Such criticism would miss the point that this collection of essays is a thoughtful and thought-provoking work by a body of distinguished scholars. A younger reviewer fresh from college might attempt a rapid appraisal of the whole work, but this reviewer claims no such omniscience. To evaluate precisely the worth of what is essentially a controversial volume is an assignment for men who have spent much the same

in studying the book as its authors spent in writing it. This reviewer could content himself by recommending it to thoughtful readers interested in social Christianity. Most Catholics engaged in the social apostolate would find it both easy to read and worth reading. Those most likely to be harmed by its periodic deviations from orthodoxy are those least likely to want to read it. The book is primarily for non-Catholic Christians; and since any social action on our part benefits from knowledge of where we stand with other groups, it has a place in the Catholic library as well.

The subjects covered include the history of the movement, and the interpretation of history; the cultural crisis and the "nature of the church" (this latter essay very Protestant!); vocation, technocracy, personality, economics and foreign policy. It is a bold attempt to bring Christian values to a world in part disrupted by the original Protestant heresy. It is tremendously encouraging to Catholics to find Protestants thinking along these lines.

NIALl BRENNAN

### Convert Story

**THE ROCK OF TRUTH**  
by Daphne Pochin Mould  
Doubleday & Ward, \$3.25

This book will take you in and about Scotland, Ireland, and England, over rocks and splendid hills, but the theme it develops is of science and secularism and

faith. An Englishwoman geologist here gives the fact-history of her emergent belief. What makes this book valuable is the author's recollection of each distinct uncertainty and the re-creation of its mood-setting so that she is able to hold it up to the faith she found and explain the one in the light of the other. Abrupt, almost terse in style, the book states the most provocative thoughts and appalling doubts in a steady declarative tone; then without delay shows how in the mind of the Church they melt into the wholeness of truth.

The actuality of the Church is disclosed in a series of contrasts revealed; God in nature and God in the Church, trained scientific skepticism and faith, religion as a refuge of primitive awe and religion as a fearless pursuit of truth, humanity as an incidental, mindless evolution and purposefully created human nature. For Miss Pochin Mould the negativism of her first thought seems to generate energy, to spur her to seek a sounder certainty. Some of her own imaginative, vivacious skepticism loom murky obscurities as the Church is hidden from her view. Perhaps she can prove it isn't there, she tries to, asking only for truth and she discovers at last that it is there, centuries new, unshattered by science and secularism. When the comitable figure in boots and haversack comes near the vast serenity of the cathedral and sees and believes, we regret that nothing but the truth affected her—not the devotion of priests, nuns, and laity, not love of Christ, not the beauty and holiness of worship—but we are relieved to remember that truth in itself is not merely necessary but sufficient.

All along the way the book includes scenes, wholly vivid and poignant, where nature speaks out to the glory of creation. The circling downlands from the height of a bell tower, an island of the Hebrides resting in the sea across the mainland, are called into being, alive with the very breath of the highlands, but briefly, as flashing impressions surprisingly a part

of an urgent journey. Throughout these perilous travels, almost having almost losing faith, we see that the author knows and loves God's universe.

It is not a soothing book, nor subtly inspirational, but if you begin you will read it for it contains the momentum of honest concern for the highest value we know.

SHIRLEY PASCOE

## Welcome Reprint

### THE BELIEF OF CATHOLICS

By Msgr. Ronald Knox  
Sheed & Ward, \$2.75

Though non-Christian religions are mentioned, this is essentially a dialogue of Catholicism and Protestantism. Msgr. Knox, taking

each side, is a conversationalist in the polite tradition. He argues as far as possible in the terms of non-Catholics and on issues of their choice. When he must leave the area of mutually accepted ideas and use terms significant particularly to Catholicism he presents the Church's position reasonably, understandably, without undue emphasis and certainly not with ill humor. His manner is rather like that of an admirable lawyer who halfway into his summation realizes with embarrassment how overwhelming the evidence is in his favor; he alludes to the fairness of the judge as to the extenuating circumstances which plead for his so-called adversary. Yet for all its adroitness, its point by point definition of conflicting ideas the book gives glimpses now and then of the joys and beauties and consolations that attend the truths of the Church. These revelations are inadvertent—any non-Catholic in a similar argument might consider the exclusion unnatural—and they do add authenticity. However, the book is objective and appeals primarily to the reason; it is true to Catholicism as fair to Protestantism.

Granting that heaven is attainable for everyone Msgr. Knox's sympathy, it seems to me, is with the Protestant in *this* world whose religious atmosphere offers him vagueness or a bewildering eclecticism along with deep sermon tones, whispers, and something like dismay at anything resembling spiritual ease. He explains the quiet, quick matter-of-factness, the brisk certainty that is often the mood of the Church as a reflection of faith with a guided destiny. A Catholic is apt to want to thank Msgr. Knox for this nice awareness.

The book is a reprint. Originally published in 1927, it shows how well the reality of the Church could be presented even without the devastating lessons of godless totalitarianism that have since swept through every mind. One reads the last page hoping that there will again be time for such humane and peaceful arguments.

SHIRLEY PASCOE

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## Tribute to Belloc

**LAIRE BELLOC: NO ALIENATED MAN**  
by Frederick Wilhelmsen  
Need & Ward, \$2.75

Not long ago Sean O'Faolain wrote that the importance of some writers lies

so much in what they wrote, in itself, as the writing they stirred up the thought they stimulated, many times in opposition of course. Perhaps Belloc's importance will lie to a great extent in this direction. He influenced the thought and writing, for example, of Peter Maurin, co-founder of *The Catholic Worker* and Ed Willock, co-founder of *Integrity*; the latter two being sympathetic, of course, to his distributism, and radically opposed to the capitalistic-monopolistic-mass-production-industrial what-e-you which Belloc hated.

Mr. Wilhelmsen, however, believes Belloc can stand on the majesty of his prose and the fact—according to Mr. Wilhelmsen, a fervent part of his subject—that Belloc is “the last guardian of the West.”

This book presents a spirited defense of some of Belloc's thought, especially his thesis on Christendom and the well-known and often-damned rope is the Faith, the Faith is Europe” business. The author shares the subject's lack of sympathy with contemporary intellectuals and their problems, and inspects in some detail an early work of Belloc's called *The Men* in which the latter's views on life and death are presented, and which showed him to be what he remained to the end, a Christian humanist.

Mr. Wilhelmsen writes enthusiastically, too, of Belloc's much criticized one-sided approach to history, his “history from within.”

Mr. Wilhelmsen is often repetitious, and one feels that this thin booklet could have been even thinner. One has seen more substantial things in booklet form: Ade Bethune's *Work*, for example, or Belloc's own *Servile State*.

JOHN STANLEY

## MARRIAGE AND BIRTH

We are happy to announce that we have just reprinted in a 4-page booklet **Marriage for Keeps** (the perennially popular issue on marriage by Ed Willock) with most of the articles from the **Birth** issue. Our readers will recall that the Birth issue of August 1953 was immensely popular; so much so that we exhausted one reprint and had to refuse orders. Included in this reprint are Father Frederick Klueg's article **Marriage and Rhythm** (a clear, concise exposition of the latest papal teaching on Rhythm with practical applications), Elaine Malley's article on **Creative Pain** in childbirth, Mary Anne Kimbell's discussion of **Family Service**, as well as Mary Reed Newland's article on breast-feeding, and the anonymous **Letter to a Lady**.

Married and engaged couples will find it especially valuable, as will priests engaged in Cana work and marriage preparation courses, and doctors and nurses.

**MARRIAGE AND BIRTH** is priced at 50¢ (40¢ each for orders of 10 or more). Order from INTEGRITY.

## BOOK NOTES

"God is well-praised and well-honored" through the psalms, Father Richard T. A. Murphy, O.P., writes in *A Commentary on the Psalms the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin*. In this commentary he explains that the psalms were written in a Hebrew type of poetry—nine of them by King David. He gives us an easily understandable interpretation of each part of the Little Office by using modern examples. This book will prove an aid to tertiaries and others to whom the daily reading of the Little Office can so easily become a "routine recitation." (Published in *The Torch*, 141 East 65th Street, New York 21, N. Y. Paper, \$1.25; cloth \$2.25.)—Theresa Kuss

*The Easter Vigil* (National Liturgical Week, Cleveland, Ohio, 1952) and *The Liturgical Year* (Third Maritime Liturgical Week, Halifax, N. S., 1952) have recently been published. It is interesting to note the differences between these two reports of liturgical conferences. The one here in Nova Scotia is reminiscent of the earliest conferences in the United States; there is a wide variety of topics and a greater simplicity of approach, proper to a beginning. The American volume is a treasure-house of information on the restored Easter Vigil, not only explaining the liturgical meaning of each part of it, but also offering numerous practical suggestions for celebrating it in a fitting manner.—J. V. C.

Highly recommended are the *Paternoster Series* (devotional classics in pamphlet form) available from Templegate at 35¢ each. Originally published in England, they include the work of such writers as Vincent McNabb, Archbishop Goodier, Thomas Merton and Juliana of Norwich. They are mostly concerned with prayer in its different aspects . . . *Tea and work Does It* is the name of a 50¢ pamphlet written by Rev. J. R. Anderson and published by the Young Christians Students, 2540 San Diego Ave., San Diego, California. For those interested in starting in high schools the Y.C.S.—a specialized Catholic Action movement among students—Father Anderson's booklet should be a big help . . . We sent the *First Catholics*, a children's story of the Acts of the Apostles written by Marigold Hunt (Sheed and Ward, \$2.75) to our seven-year-old book reviewer, Michael Nolte, and received this comment. "I liked it when Paul was doing so well in Ephesus. And I liked the whole book very much." . . . *The Spiritual Maxims of St. Francois de Sales* (edited by Kelley, Harper, \$2.25) is an excellent little volume to dip into when one needs a bit of inspiration, a thought for meditation, or a means to raise one's heart to God. A collection of aphorisms, naturally it is not meant to be read at one sitting. It will serve as an introduction to the wisdom of this most practical of saints.—D.D.

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So asks Dan Herr in **Books on Trial**. Needless to say we agree with him, and you will too after you see **The Willock Book**, a collection of the best cartoons and jingles of Ed Willock's that have appeared in INTEGRITY.

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# or NEW READERS

(Continued from outside back cover)

**OPERATION.** This has many wonderful articles about the necessity of attacking modern problems cooperatively, as well as on the difficulties and delights of a group apostolate.

**WORK AND WORSHIP.** Some people say work needs to be restored; others say no, worship is the important thing. We say both; this issue explains why.

**DAILY WORK.** This issue concerns practically everybody. Articles on the ideal of work as well as on the troubles of industrialism.

**ESCAPE FROM REALITY.** People do it in a number of ways. N. A. Krause discusses how men do it through the ladies' magazines.

**CHANNELS OF GRACE.** Among new developments in the apostolate are Caritas House, the work of the Little Sisters of Charles de Foucauld, and Family Service programs. Articles on all three.

**POSTULATE IN PRINT.** This contains Ed Lock's article on the **Facts of Life** (the magazine).

**SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.** This contains an article on nihilism and the hatred of life, as well as a defense of Thomas Merton.

For Mary's Year: **MORE ABOUT MARY**—an issue that brings Mary into family life. Articles on Mariology, Our Lady and children, Mary as a barrier to Protestants, **Mother of the Mentally Ill**.

**ONE WORLD.** Advocates of world government as well as isolationists should read this one.

**THE CROSS.** Elaine Malley writes on the **Martyr Complex**, and Dorothy Dohen discusses the meaning of suffering.

**THE RAIN-MAKERS** has a rather misleading title. For this issue also contains an article on psychiatry, the servant problem, and the N.A.M.I. Quite a combination.

**PROGRESS.** Where are we going? It's a good question to ask at the beginning of a new year. Also contains articles on technology and advertising.

**HEROISM.** We are all called to it, Father Egan tells us, and the other authors differentiate between it and mock heroics. Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra writes on **Heroism and the Conscripted Conscience**.

**HOPE.** Amid threats of atom bombs, hope is a virtue that should be coming into its own. It's entirely different from optimism you know.

**CREATIVE ACTIVITY.** Articles by Gerald Vann, Caryll Houselander, Marion Mitchell Stancioff. All delightful. You won't need any more encouragement to be creative.

PLEASE ENCLOSE PAYMENT WITH ORDER

# For NEW READERS



We don't claim that **INTEGRITY** is for everyone from eight to eighty (though we know tiny children who enjoy our cartoons and octogenarians who still find **INTEGRITY** worth reading) but we do claim that among the back issues listed below there'll be something of interest to everyone. New readers especially will be glad to stock up on back **INTEGRITY** at the special rate of **five for a dollar**.

**THE MAKING OF THE HOME.** This is a must issue for anyone married, engaged, or just looking.

**HOUSING.** Not only the aged but practically everyone else has a housing problem. Read Ed Willock's account of the Marycrest community.

**EDUCATION.** Sister M. Dulcidia questions "For Whose Honor and Glory" we are educating children in our parochial schools; A. P. Campbell discusses the ideal college.

**PEACE AND WAR.** A pacific issue that's aroused a lot of controversy. It contains articles on the pros and cons of pacifism, as well as Father Foley's *The Christines* and the *Apostolate of Peace*. •

**RESTORING ALL THINGS.** Christ needs to live again in work, recreation, the field of psychology, relations between Christians. Articles by Charlene Schwartz, Father George Tavard, Mary Reed Newland.

**THE PAPACY.** This is an issue devoted to the Popes, and more especially to their influence on social problems in the past fifty years. Recommended, among other things, for classroom use.

**COMMUNISM.** A penetrating analysis of the real reason we should fight communism. Articles by Marion Stancioff, Charles Koninck.

**THE CRISIS.** Peter Michael's brilliant analysis of the contemporary situation. Especially recommended to those who are unaware there is a crisis.

**THE DISPOSSESSED.** A moving account of the plight of war refugees, as well as a much-quoted article on alcoholism by an alcoholic.

**OVERPOPULATION.** Read this issue if you are inclined to agree that whether we like it or not Margaret Sanger has the only answer for Asia's teeming millions.

(Continued on inside back cover)